Grading System by CBSE

*22. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister to HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have allowed Central Board of Secondary Education to introduce grading system from the current/next year; and

(b) whether other such Boards were consulted or the new policy is proposed to be imposed on them, once the CBSE pattern is implemented?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) and (b) The National Policy on Education has recommended the use of Grades in place of marks as one of the steps to recast the examination system. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), which is an autonomous organisation has taken a decision, in principle, to introduce the Grade System in declaration of results.

In order to implement the decision, discussions are being held with various Schools, Teaching Community, Parents Representatives, Universities and other Boards. The question of imposing the Grade System by the CBSE on other Boards does not arise. The Council of Boards of School Education (COBSE), of which all the State Boards are members, in its Annual Conference held in December, 1999 have also recommended introduction of Grading System for declaring results.

Subsidy loss due to diversion of PDS foodgrains

*23. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that substantial portion of the subsidy continues to be lost because of diversion of P.D.S. foodgrains to the open market despite various measures taken to revampt the system;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof, stating the estimated annual loss of subsidy as a result thereof;

(c) what are the major causes identified by Government for failure to check diversion of P.D.S. foodgrains to open market; and

(d) what measures are contemplated by Government to bring about improvement in the P.D.S. and check the diversions?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR): (a) The Tata Economic Consultancy Service (TECS) was engaged in the year 1997 for a study to assess the extent of diversion of foodgrains, sugar and edible oil from Public Distribution System (PDS) in the country. At the national level the diversion is estimated at 36% in case of wheat and 31% in case of rice.

(b) The percentage of diversion with reference to the different targetted groups for whom there are different Central Issue Prices is not available from the study which was conducted around the time Targetted PDS was introduced. It is, therefore, not possible to quantify the loss of subsidy in monetary terms.

(c) The major causes for diversion cited in the study are bulk diversion from godowns, bogus units in ration cards, underweighment at various levels, illiteracy of consumers, low profit margins for Fair Price Shops (FDS) owners, floating populations, fictitious distribution agencies, non-availability/irregular supply and variation in entitlement and inferior quality with foreign particles.

(d) Public Distribution System is implemented under the joint responsibility of the Central and State Governments/UT Administrations. The Central Government is responsible for procurement, storage and transportation of the PDS commodities up to the central godowns and making them available to the States. The responsibility for distribution to the consumers through the Fair Price Shops and administration of the PDS rests with the State Governments and UT Administrations. State Government have been requested to closely monitor PDS at the Fair Price Shops (FPSs) and other levels and to make arrangement for distribution of PDS commodities in a transparent and accountable manner by involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) etc. in implementation of PDS.

They have also been asked to eliminate bogus ration cards and initiate action against erring FPS owners under Section 3 of Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

The Government of India have set up Public Grievances' Redressal Cell in the Department of Public Distribution to attend to the complaints relating to any aspect of the Departments' functioning including the Public Distribution System. The Public Grievances' Redressal Cell has been provided with independent telephone, fax and e-mail facilities in addition to a facilitation counter to receive the public complaints. In order to attend to public complaints on priority, the Department has also designated the senior officers of the Department as members of flying squad for conducting immediate and prompt enquiry whenever the need for it is felt. The Government of India also has appointed Area Officers to States/UTs to monitor the functioning of Public Distribution System including the complaints of diversion.

Seizure of Skins and Claws of Wild Animals

*24. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a truck-load of skins of leopards, tigers, jungle fox and other rare wild animals was seized in Ghaziabad on December 18-19, 1999;

(b) if so, the details and the estimated cost of the catche;

(c) whether any gang of smugglers and poachers has been caught and netted; if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what steps have been taken and are being taken to curb the menace?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) One package containing skins of wild animals was seized from a truck carrying clothing at Ghaziabad on December 18-19, 1999.